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ABSTRACT

This report reviews the literature that is pertinent to a broad understanding of the teacher center concept and to the specific problems of designing a teacher center. Emphasis is placed on the origins, themes, methods of operation, and future plans for teacher centers. The origins include the revolution in teacher training underway in England, the stress placed on ongoing in-service teacher training in the United States, and the movement toward competency-based teacher education and certification. The major themes stress the felt needs of the teacher, a school improvement thrust, and a need to increase teacher competency. Three styles of operating teacher centers are discussed: the informal English style, the corporate style, and the competency-oriented style. A 29-item bibliography is included. (MJM)

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CONCEPTS OF TEACHER CENTERS

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by
Bruce R. Joyce and Marsha Weil

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FOREWORD

Bruce R. Joyce and Marsha Weil have again applied their fertile minds to an analysis of a concept--this time, teacher centers. They have developed a conceptual means of analyzing teacher centers. While the literature is filled with down-to-earth descriptions of how to organize and operate a teacher center, this publication deals with origins, themes, and broad guidelines. It is a fine one to stimulate thoughtful study of existing centers or to plan for the establishment of a new teacher center. Not only do the writers take a trained look at American teacher centers but they also note the similarities and dissimilarities between the American and British approach. The Joyce and Weil paper enables readers to establish a conceptual continuity between where teacher centers have come from--both the American experience and the British experience--and the sound implementation of a concept which has so many ramifications. The clearinghouse expresses sincere appreciation to the writers--very busy and productive professionals.

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--Joel L. Burdin, Director

May 1973

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We had the help of a great many others in preparing this report. Directors of teacher centers generously sent papers and reports which are in short supply. Joel Burdin, director of the ERIC Clearinghouse, and his fine staff were marvelous--his staff with bibliography and Joel himself with encouragement and reality testing.

James B. Steffensen of the Teacher Corps provided all kinds of ideas and stability.

Allen Schmieder of the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Systems was extremely generous. Two of his own publications in this area are basic references for the field. His chapter on teacher centers in the volume edited by Houston and Howsam and his *Competency-Based Education: The State of the Scene* (see Bibliography) are written from a vantage more broad and inclusive than we could hope to have.

ABSTRACT

This report reviews the literature that is pertinent to a broad understanding of the teacher center concept and to the specific problems of designing a teacher center. Emphasis is placed on the origins, themes, methods of operation, and future plans for teacher centers. The origins include the revolution in teacher training underway in England, the stress placed on ongoing in-service teacher training in the United States, and the movement toward competency-based teacher education and certification. The major themes stress the felt needs of the teacher, a school improvement thrust, and a need to increase teacher competency. Three styles of operating teacher centers are discussed: the informal English style, the corporate style, and the competency-oriented style. A 29-item bibliography is included. (MJM)

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TOPIC: *"Concepts of Teacher Centers."*

DESCRIPTORS TO USE IN CONTINUING SEARCH OF RIE AND CIJE:

*Inservice Teacher Education
Performance Based Teacher Education
*School Community Cooperation
*Teacher Education
Teacher Education Curriculum
*Teacher Programs
*Teaching Skills

*Asterisk(s) indicate major descriptors.

PROLOGUE: THE GOLDEN MOUNTAIN

Once a tribe prospered by the shore of a sea whose horizon was perpetually shrouded in mist, although the shore itself was generally sunny and pleasant. One day the chief voiced discontent with his treasury and wished for more gold to count. One of the diggers of the tribe, who occupied his days bringing coal from a nearby hill, suggested to his wife that it would be lovely if they could find a mountain of gold to complement their mountain of coal.

A wise man, reflecting on this thought, told to him in jest by the digger's wife, speculated that there might be such a mountain on an island beyond the mist. The boatmen of the tribe peered hard at the horizon and wondered whether the reflections from the morning sun might not be from the golden mountain.

The chief, hearing the men talk about the golden mountain, accused them of keeping gold from him. They denied this. He and they decided, however, to go to the mountain and share the gold. They set off and were heard of no more.

A stranger, visiting the tribe, is told that the chief and the boatmen live on the golden isle, where they take their pleasure with golden girls.

Such are the words of men.

INTRODUCTION

Like waves, new concepts are constantly emerging so that men can reorganize and shape their thinking about old problems and phenomena in more powerful ways. Often the immediate symbolic usefulness of these new concepts outruns our knowledge of their practical applications and implications. (Because they help us think better, we tend to believe they will immediately help us to act more effectively.) If we are not careful, we kill a worthwhile idea in the discourse of the political world before we have the chance to work out its details in the practical world. It dies, as it were, before its referents are born.

"Teacher center" is such a concept. It is an idea with such obvious attractiveness and power as to seem almost fully developed, although its real-world referents are few and partial. Except perhaps for those planners who have tried to implement the concept, we tend to speak, or feel we should speak, of teacher centers as if they had precise operational meaning--as if the completed blueprints and technology were available for the building of this uniquely new institution. Teacher centers are both advocated and condemned through ascribed definitions without examples. Lest we risk losing a valuable idea in the whirl of political and entrepreneurial activities, we need to acknowledge that both the blueprints and the technology of teacher centers are in the emergent state; that the teacher center concept is not totally new and unique in the history of preservice and in-service education; and, finally, that "teacher center" is a multidimensional construct for which there is no one definition but only emphases and preferences.

The purpose of this report is to pull together the literature that is pertinent to a broad understanding of the teacher center concept and to the specific problems of designing a teacher center. Our thought is to locate and highlight the properties and possibilities for teacher centers by placing them among their historical precedents and their contemporary exemplars.

ORIGINS

The movement toward teacher centers has had a number of origins which interact interestingly at the present time. They may produce a movement which conceivably could pass as no more than a ripple in the history of education or which might, just possibly, become one of the major innovations in teacher training of the twentieth century.

One of the origins is from the revolution in schooling and teacher training that apparently is underway in England at the present time (20). The combination of events stimulated by the Schools Council (28), the Plowden report (19), the more recent James report on teacher training (7), and the general Infant School movement (29) have all resulted in the establishment of a far greater need for teacher training at the in-service level than England has had for some time. This movement has interacted with the tradition in England that the teacher continues his studies throughout his career and has resulted in the establishment of a variety of types of teacher centers. These centers

of in-service education range from informal environments in which teachers study new curriculum materials and talk with others who have experimented with them to rather formal settings for workshops in which teachers study particular curriculum forms which they intend to introduce into their classrooms. Stimulated especially by the efforts of the private American foundations, the English movement for school reform has had enormous publicity in the United States (24). Both the Infant School ideas and the image of the informal teacher centers have become banners under which many current efforts in the United States are pursued.

A certain stimulus to establish a tradition of ongoing in-service teacher education in the United States has come from the U.S. Office of Education. *Teachers for the Real World* (25) argues persuasively for the establishment of centers for teacher education in or very close to the setting in which the teacher works--the schools. It suggests that colleges and universities have been adequate for teaching general theories about teaching but not for clinical training and that new institutions need to be created for that purpose. These institutions will have to be based on consortia involving university and school district personnel, representatives of teachers associations, the community and teacher education student themselves. In a series of lesser-publicized documents, arguments have been presented for the establishment of environments within schools and school districts in which teachers would engage in the continuing study of curricular and instructional alternatives and pursue the scholarly study of their own teaching (21).

Another origin has been the movement toward competency-based teacher education and certification (8). Although the major thrust of this movement has thus far been at the preservice level (13), all of the articulated conceptions of competency-based education have assumed continuing education for the teacher and availability within the teacher's workday environment for teacher centers, in which teachers would analyze their competency and would engage in efforts to improve their performance. Nearly all of the individuals who were prominent in the development of the U.S.O.E. Bureau of Research teacher education projects in the late 1960's have become involved with the teacher center movement and have generated a variety of models for competency-based teacher centers (1).

The literature of the teacher center movement includes the documents stimulated by the U.S. Office of Education; those related to the teacher centers of England, Russia, and Japan; and proposals for competency-based education. The bulk of the literature which describes the potential operations of teacher centers comes from those which have been funded, at least in their planning stages, by the U.S. Office of Education. The organizations themselves arelocated in nearly all parts of the country. As with the first stages of nearly every movement, the early literature on teacher centers is partial and flawed. It was the original intention of the authors of this review to concentrate their analysis primarily on the substance of teacher centers, that is to say, an analysis of their educational goals, means, and assessment procedures. Descriptions of teacher competency and various training modes for improving competency were expected to be the primary sources of substance. As it turns out,

the bulk of the literature relevant to teacher centers deals with the problems of organizing them. Nearly all of the teacher centers which have been established in the United States have involved coalitions of school districts, colleges, and community organizations. Not surprisingly, problems of coordination and government have consumed much of the energy of the planners of teacher centers, and these concerns--rather than the substantive focus of training and the training process--are reflected in their literature. Even in those few teacher centers which have been well funded and which are presently in operation, only a small proportion of the available documents deal with the objectives and the means of training. Apparently we shall have to await a "second generation" of literature before we will find much of educational substance to add to the political substance of the present literature.

Because of the partial and relatively fugitive nature of the literature, we have not prepared an annotated bibliography in the usual sense but have tried to focus on the meanings of "teacher center."

THE MAJOR THEMES

Despite its fugitive quality, the literature on the teacher center is very interesting. One reason is that it may be the beginning of a restructuring of the kinds of institutions that prepare teachers. The Task Force of the NDEA National Institute for Advanced Study in Training Disadvantaged Youth, responsible for the publication *Teachers for the Real World*, made the point in 1969 that university personnel and facilities are inadequate to carry on the necessary training for school personnel. In fact, they asserted that at present no one institution can do this job. As the National Committee on Training Complexes stated the case, "The nation's educational needs have changed dramatically and have surpassed the capabilities of any single institution presently responsible for training teachers" (6:13).

In other words, the teacher center movement may be the precursor of a new institution which will embody a new kind of teacher training. The actual form and substance of this cannot be seen clearly from the literature that exists at this point, but a number of trends seem to be clear.

One trend is the attempt to build training complexes (the phrase "training complex" appears throughout the literature on teacher centers). Organized jointly, public schools, colleges, universities, community members, and public agencies bring their resources together under a kind of gubernatorial system which provides a place for university personnel, teachers, teachers-in-training, community members, and technologists in the actual shaping of activities.

> Responsible to the individual needs of all the cooperating systems, (trainees, schools, higher education, teacher's organizations, community, pupils and parents) training complexes will be free to employ a variety of training models which no single system can presently effect. [6:6]

Three characteristics of the organization are apparent in the literature. First, they will be established by consortia, including most of the above-mentioned representatives, to provide continuing education for teachers.

Secondly, the major focus will be clinical training for the teacher. This may be accomplished through informal settings in which teachers experiment with clinical materials (such as characterize the English teacher centers); or they may feature instructional systems such as minicourses which teachers can use for studying their teaching (as in the Columbia Teachers College Center); or they might utilize interaction analysis or one of the other systems for studying teaching (as in the Bay Area Complex). In any event they will be close to the setting in which the teacher works, i.e., *teacher centers will be in schools*. Even though university professors or personnel from other institutions and schools might perform as its primary staff, the care of the center will be close to the field.

Thirdly, while most of the teacher center efforts in the U.S. have had emphasis on the culturally disadvantaged, the broader purpose of bringing about a positive educational change through the in-service training of educational personnel is critical in the movement. The background statement on educational renewal from the December 1971 Conference of State Educational Coordinators contains a statement which reflects this evolution.

> The renewal strategy is not an abrupt shift into action; it is a logical development based on long experience in the Office of Education. Much of the Federal legislation providing assistance to education has been formulated in global terms but the resources provided have been limited and consequently the national needs and priorities have barely been met. These efforts have clearly demonstrated to the field and to the Office of Education the complexities of solving educational problems. [26:74]

With the movement in such an early stage and the expectation that so many participants will share in working out ends and means, it is not surprising that the literature is so sparse with respect to the substance and form of training. Put simply, until the organization is established and has developed a mode for participation by all parties, activities cannot be specifically planned. However, from what has been said above, it can be seen that teacher centers are designed around three general objectives:

1. They serve the felt needs of the teacher, providing a place where he can improve himself on his own terms;
2. They serve a school improvement thrust, helping teachers acquire the competency needed to implement new curricula or improve existing ones; and
3. They are designed to increase teacher competency along predetermined lines or in response to diagnosis by his peers or supervisors.

A teacher center may confine itself to one of these goals or may (usually will) adopt several. Thus, in many senses, the movement toward teacher centers often assumes that the teacher will have a far greater role in his destiny than has been the case. However, at the same time, the advocates of teacher centers also hope that they will become much more responsive to educational thrusts than teacher education has been in the past. Traditional in-service teacher training in almost every nation in the world has been separated from the actual functions of the teacher to the point where innovative thrusts have hardly been coordinated with training. Thus, for example, the movement toward "open plan" schools in the United States, Canada, and to some extent Western Europe has found most teachers unready to work productively in schools which require team teaching, continuous analysis of teaching, and the creation of learning centers for children. Yet most of the in-service training provided by universities and by the school districts in summer workshops has been largely didactic and has not developed in teachers the competencies necessary to activate the new environments in productive ways.

These themes can all be seen in the James report (7) on teacher education and training in England. The committee chaired by Lord James very wisely decided to look first at the continuing education of teachers, then at their preservice education or the training necessary to get them ready to operate in the schools, and finally at their general education. Previously--in the U.S. and England--teacher education was considered in the reverse: the general education which was necessary first, then the preservice level, and finally the continuing in-service training of the teacher. Because no institutions have been developed to pursue the three levels effectively, the latter two--preservice and in-service training--have been largely ineffectual. A teacher learns subject matter as part of his general education; he learns methodology for teaching it at the preservice level; but then--when he has put his substantive and theoretical knowledge into effect--he enters an institution in which training is relatively haphazard. The James committee instead considered the construction of a matrix of teacher centers within the schools which would provide for the continuing education of teachers; they then worked backwards to consider what kind of preservice education was necessary before that point.

The James report is very explicit on the need for teacher centers, not only to respond to the needs of teachers but also to the innovative thrusts which are generated to improve education. The James report assumes that teachers will be given sabbaticals or "seconded" for one term each 7 years, that "professional tutors" will be placed in each school, and that a variety of training opportunities will be developed. The report further says,

> Without moving from their schools, teachers may have to adapt themselves to important changes. New teaching methods, the introduction of new elements into the curriculum, movements of population where the local factors may change the character of schools in the nature of their work. Developments in local and national policies may have radical effects upon the way of life

within particular schools. . . .Changes of this type can create problems of adjustment which in-service training facilities can do much to ease, but they are perhaps problems (on a larger scale) of the same type as those which the individual teacher may encounter when he moves from one school to another. [7:8]

STYLES OF OPERATION

The centers are difficult to classify but at this point we discern, somewhat uncertainly, three styles of operation. We call these the "informal" style, the "corporate" style, and the "competency-oriented" style. As with purposes, more than one of these styles often are found in the same agency.

The Informal "English" Style

The informal style of operating a center exists much more in the hortatory literature than in real-world exemplars. It is used to create an environment in which teachers explore curriculum materials and help each other think out approaches to teaching. Staff are probably experienced teachers who rotate into the center for awhile and return to the classroom. Such a center seeks to improve cooperative activities among teachers.

The spread of the English Infant School practices, transformed into the "open classroom" in America (29), brought with it the notion of centers in which teachers would actively engage in their training by exploring methods and materials together.

When we think of the three styles of centers in terms of types of objectives--teacher-generated, diagnosis-centered, and renewal-oriented--we find that the informal center employs only teacher-generated objectives. The other two center styles embrace any of the objectives. A corporate style center can offer a large variety of opportunities, some elected by the teacher, some on referral, and some in line with a renewal thrust. A competency-oriented center can also cater to teachers, serve diagnostic needs, or respond to curricular change.

Although the movement for reform in English practices is often linked to the rise of teacher centers there, the connection is not as great as sometimes assumed. The Plowden report (19) refers throughout to the need for extensive teacher retraining, but its actual treatment of in-service training is conventional. The movement toward in-service education gave us a need for new teacher competency, not necessarily because teachers felt the need, but because the new procedures required the change (in our terms, renewal-oriented objectives).

The much-publicized James report mentioned earlier is clearly not a teacher-centered document. It recommends extended and more rigorous training for teachers and improved organization and administration of training and licensing. Generally, its treatment of training content and procedures is sensibly conventional--an upgrading of the profession

through an increase of training time. Very little is said about either contemporary training technologies (such as the use of instructional systems, self-recording of teacher behavior, etc.) or training centers which depend on teacher selection or motivation (again, renewal orientation).

Reports of actual operations of teacher centers in England (3) appear to represent the corporate style, i.e., a wide range of workshops and courses. However, many of the workshops apparently emphasized informal activity--weekends at old mansions with much manipulation of learning materials. This style, apart from the others, has become the image of the English center.

> Teachers' Centers are just what the term implies: local physical facilities and self-improvement programs organized and run by the teachers themselves for purposes of upgrading educational performance. Their primary function is to make possible a review of existing curricula and other educational practices by groups of teachers and to encourage teacher attempts to bring about changes. [3:146]

Bailey (3) points out many other types of activities and adds that the British experience is recent and "meager." Yet his emphasis on the virtues of informal, teacher-directed methods typifies the image of the informal center. Vincent Rogers emphasizes that the informal style of center relates to a difference between English and American educational thinking.

> British teachers and headmasters conceive of the curriculum as a series of starting or jumping-off places. An idea, a question, an observation--child's or teacher's--acts as a stone thrown in the middle of a quiet pond. The ripples begin, one idea leads to another, and a study is underway. In contrast, American educators seem far more concerned from a curricular point of view with identifying and then covering some particular order or sequence, a series of ideas, concepts, generalizations or skills that (theoretically) form the backbond of any curriculum effort. [20:288]

Despite Rogers' distinction, the informal view of training has many antecedents in the United States (14). Most curriculum workers from the Progressive era emphasized teacher involvement to the extent that teachers were expected to plan curricula, collect materials, and train themselves (5). Those involved in clinical supervision in the 1950's and 1960's had similar points of view (9), as did Schaefer in *The School as a Center of Inquiry* (21).

The teacher-directed, informal style should have great appeal to teachers' organizations, as indicated in the proposal for teacher centers by the National Education Association Committee on Teacher Centers (10). The Committee, chaired by the late Ole Sand (members: Anna Hyer, Robert Luke, and Margaret Knispel), prepared a report which is interesting particularly because it reflects the interest of one

of the two major professional organizations for teachers. It suggests that local education associations engage in the creation of teacher centers, and it describes four types of teacher centers.

One type, described as being "the teacher's own turf," is operated by the teachers themselves in areas where they can get materials and equipment and where they can relate to persons. The second type of center is similar but provides for more staff support, although the report suggests that long-term staff be kept at a minimum and short-term consultants be used to respond to local teacher needs. The latter is an attempt to provide staff who can help teachers learn how to diagnose their activities. The third type of center also focuses on around needs. It provides for a team of specialists who can create short-term educational offerings for the teachers on demand. This arrangement places greater emphasis on the staff, its competency, and the activities. The fourth example suggests that a teacher center exists almost anywhere that resources are provided to bring together a group of teachers and experts to look at the teachers' problems and do something about solving them.

The participant oriented training complexes tend to embrace the informal style (18); the broader the base of participants, the more this style can be expected to be used. Obviously, the style can take many forms and clearly can be one aspect of a corporate center. In the United Kingdom, a teacher center is much more a servant of the thrust for informal education than is generally believed in America.

The "Corporate" Center

A center of the second or corporate style is a many-sided organization which provides a variety of activities. It may operate--singly or in collaboration--preservice education programs and community activities, as well as in-service education. It may provide audiovisual and library services and coordinate course offerings and workshops. It may also serve as the place where the state, higher education, and schools come together to cooperate in teacher education.

Such a center may originate in any of the agencies which commonly engage in the above activities. More commonly a state, such as Texas, or a large school district, such as Montgomery County, Maryland, will establish such a center.

Every large organization has staff development needs and education is no exception. The central administration of the Montgomery County schools operates from a plan developed by the management consultants Booz, Allen and Hamilton, which serves big corporations more frequently than educational groups. From this plan has come a massive staff development system which offers several hundred workshops and courses each year; provides consultants to schools where teachers (and students) require help to carry out activities they have initiated; operates microteaching laboratories in centers which bring together university personnel, pre- and in-service teachers; and also maintains reservoirs of curriculum materials which teachers can examine and adapt (16,17).

Within this approach a variety of training styles can be maintained, some prescriptive and some responsive. The perspective of the Texas Education Agency is clearly corporate, yet it is combined with a competency orientation. Prior to the availability of federal funding, the agency coordinated several plans which were increased and stimulated by the federal effort.

> The 19 Teacher Centers receiving a minimal amount of external financial assistance, and the additional 7 that have indicated a desire to participate during 1972-73, represent: 34 percent teacher training institutions that train approximately 90% of the teacher trainees in Texas; 66 elementary and secondary schools that serve approximately 85% of the school age students in Texas (950,000); and the 20 education service Centers that serve all the public elementary and secondary schools in Texas.
>
> Each Center has agreed: (1) that teacher education should be performance-based; (2) that the setting for teacher education should be the educational cooperative (Teacher Center), involving elementary and secondary schools, higher education, education service centers, the profession, and the community; and (3) that best teacher education must take form as an integral part of the process of continuous renewal or updating. [27:68]

The agency-coordinated efforts include a thrust toward broad participation and a shaping of activities around agreed-on goals for educational renewal. The centers offer an impressive range of services related to the three goals quoted above.

The Appalachian Training Complex (6) also offers a very wide range of services designed to influence staff development at all levels and to stimulate reform of education. Like Texas, the Appalachian group includes services related to the three goals. It is located primarily in Boone, North Carolina but has expanded into the eight counties served by the Northwest Regional Educational Center of that state. The approach in the training complex has been to develop an innovative project within a school which is then used as a training center for other teachers and university students (12). In this way the center is a real-world operation which offers the expertise of personnel who have been engaged in an innovation. Up to this point, projects have been developed in the following fields: administrative training, individualized instruction in the elementary school, special education, reading, early childhood education, career education, dropout prevention and reclamation, high school curriculum and instructional improvement, and computer utilization. Innovative approaches have also been used in a media center, community school, adult basic education program, instructional television program, undergraduate student involvement in teacher training, and several others. Generally speaking, it is a state-centered consortium in which an innovative project becomes the definer of the training program.

Many teacher centers came into existence through the desire for a new kind of institutional mechanism to carry out the preservice and in-service training of school personnel, hence the notion of "teacher center" (also called "training complex"). The NDEA Task Force, responsible for the publication *Teachers for the Real World*, made the point that university personnel and facilities are inadequate to carry on the necessary training for school personnel. A later report by the National Ad Hoc Committee on Training Complexes reiterated this point (6). The committee felt that what is needed is a training complex organized jointly by public schools, universities, colleges, and community and related public agencies, thus drawing on the formal resources of the universities and schools and the informal resources of the community. The national committee pursued the implication of the training complex and developed seven pilot training complexes. In its final report, the committee cited the need for further guidelines on the development of training complexes.

The Bay Area Cooperative Teacher Center reflects the desire to build a new institution which will have a broad range of functions in its area. According to a report on the Bay Area center, "the mission of the Teacher Center is perceived as a training agency for a systematically planned series of efforts to bring about improvement in the quality of learning experiences available to all children and adults, particularly those Black, Chicano, Asian, American Indian and other children whose school achievement does not reflect ability. As such, it should provide the primary linkage between educational needs of the community and the total range of human, informational, technological (including instructional materials and practices), and financial resources, in order that educational personnel and agencies may continuously improve the learning opportunities and, indeed, the quality of learning of those to be educated, be they children or adults, in or outside formal educational institutions. From this perspective, the Center should, therefore be an important part of multidimensional approaches for educational improvement. The Center will provide the close, interactive support required to provide the local educator or organization immediate access to the full range of training resources needed to bring about and maintain goal-oriented changes in education.

"The central focus of the Center will be its role as a facilitating agency to: (1) provide coordination for all teacher training activities now being conducted, from whatever source, by whatever person or agency, in order to achieve greater impact, cost effectiveness and improvement; (2) achieve more effective deployment of existing training efforts, particularly to individual school sites, and to the administrative and instructional personnel that work together at those sites; (3) develop new training programs or products or processes to meet currently unmet needs." The report on the Bay Area center also provides an excellent brief description of the pilot centers, which range from broad service centers to rather small consortia of schools and higher education institutions" (4:5-6).

A very interesting complex was developed at Louisville, involving a large number of local agencies and federally supported projects. The breadth of this complex is illustrated in the opening statement of goals in a report on the complex.

> The Louisville Urban Education Center was formed by the Louisville Public Schools, the University of Kentucky, and the University of Louisville to act as a vehicle for responding to the following needs of its sponsoring institutions:
>
> A. The examination of the objectives of public education as they apply to the pluralistic population of an urban school system.
>
> B. The improvement of education in an urban setting by means of implementation and evaluation of theoretically sound programmatic and procedural designs.
>
> C. The improvement of preservice and in-service teacher education programs in order to raise the quality of urban teaching.
>
> The Center has the following set of goals:
>
> A. Provide additional resources for the identification of specific problems of urban education.
>
> B. Provide additional resources for the evaluation of urban educational programs.
>
> C. Increase the access of the school system to resources for the generation, development, testing and installation of innovative solutions to practical educational problems.
>
> D. Provide access to schools for research, development and installation of projects originated by university faculty and graduate students.
>
> E. Increase the responsiveness of the universities to the in-service training needs of school personnel both in terms of quantity and quality.
>
> F. Provide access to schools for the development and evaluation of improved preservice, in-service and graduate models of professional training.
>
> G. Provide opportunities for staff development among university personnel through their closer involvement in problems of urban schools.
>
> H. Provide a vehicle for long-range and large-scale research projects of common interest to the sponsoring institutions with assured coordination and continuity.
>
> I. Provide internship experiences for graduate students within the Center or schools. [15:1]

What we have called the corporate style has sometimes been the generation of activities within an existing educational corporation (as in the case of Montgomery County and Texas Education Agency) or the creation of a complex linking participants in an area not previously organized corporately (as Bay Area, Appalachia, and Clark).

The Competency-Based Center

The introductory section of the Texas Triple T project report captures the style of a competency-based center (although the Texas Agency operation also has a corporate style).

> Educational accountability has created the need for a whole new philosophy and method of training teachers. The principle that the school is responsible for its product is a fact accepted and expected by the populace. The framed-in-glass degree on the wall is no longer the only guarantor of the teacher's worth. Performance is the pivot point.
>
> The basic reason for the Texas Teacher Center Project is in response to the question: 'What do we have to do to make sure that the performance of the teacher in the classroom becomes the major objective of our schools and colleges of education?' In other words, how do we build a teacher education program in Texas, beginning the day a person decides to enter the teaching profession until he or she retires, that places ability ahead of a somewhat sterile collection of semester hours or a specified number of training hours?
>
> The strategy being used in the Project, in an attempt to provide some answers to that question, began by placing the responsibility for developing this new way of training teachers in the hands of that total educational system: the state department of education, higher education, the elementary and secondary school systems, the education service centers, and the communities which they serve. [27:3]

Thus the total system or corporate effort is expressed in an attempt to identify teacher competencies, develop instructional systems which will permit them to attain these competencies, and develop assessment and diagnostic systems related to teacher performance.

Essentially, a competency-oriented approach in the teacher center literature is a software orientation. It is developed around sets of instructional systems which provide teachers with a means of acquiring teaching skills and strategies. It operates in the following style.

"The function of a competency-based Teacher Center within an educational area (a complex of schools serving a defined geographic area) is to provide three types of flexible teacher education support to the educational effort:

1. General support through training to improve teacher competence within defined teacher roles. This support should be guided by diagnosis of teacher performance in the area with training concentrated in the domains of greatest need in terms of the educational priorities of the area. For example, if a priority in the area were English as a Second Language for young children, training might be concentrated but not limited to competency in that domain.

2. Flexible support to teachers by helping them diagnose their performance and receive training to increase specific competencies in terms of their needs. For example, if a teacher wishes to improve his skills, training would be provided on the most individual basis possible.

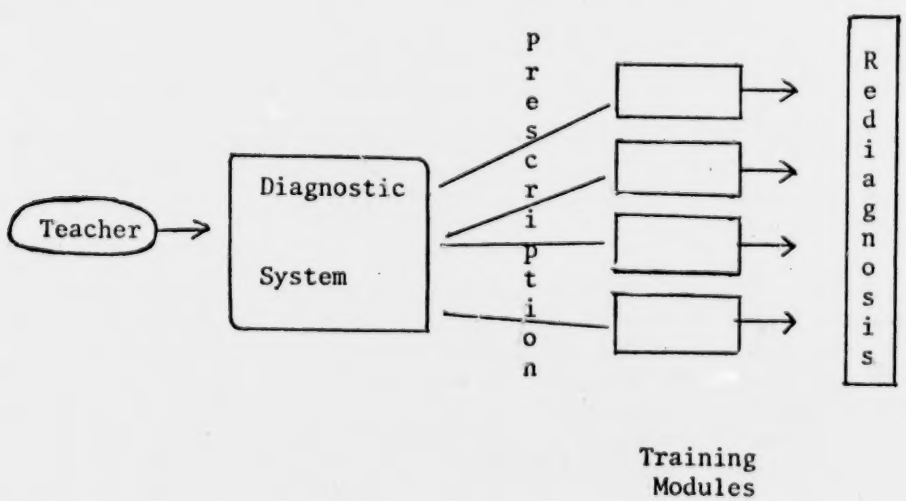
3. Support to innovative efforts within the area. For example, a Teacher Center should be capable of providing support to all phases of a general innovation like the Parkway School in Philadelphia or to a thrust in school organization (such as the establishment of open-plan schools built around learning Centers) or to a curriculum reform thrust (such as the improvement of instruction in a curriculum area such as science or reading).

"To fulfill these missions, a Teacher Center will have to develop a combination of precision and flexibility which probably cannot be obtained without the magnitude of development effort required to create a comprehensive teacher education program.

"Each of the three missions of a Teacher Center requires diagnostic capability, a flexible modular training system, and a management system for relating the two, monitoring effectiveness, and organizing program revision.

"A Teacher Center need not offer all possible services but could be developed to accomplish limited training objectives or types of training support within the three types of mission, but even in a limited Center precision of diagnosis, training and management would require a complete system of interrelated diagnostic, training and management functions.

"Thus the effectiveness of a Center will depend on the definition of working models of the teacher or aspects of teacher performance, and the development of training systems to bring about competence within the models of performance. If this is accomplished, then the mode of functioning of a Teacher Center can be diagrammed thus:



"Without a reasonable flexibility in training components the mission of a Teacher Center would have to be quite specific and limited. The greater the array of training components, the larger the mission of support can be and the greater its flexibility in meeting teacher needs" (12:70).

Most of the competency-oriented centers are organized to provide specific rather than general training to teachers. The Clark University MATE program, described below, is an example.

General Purpose of MATE

MATE provides in-service training for teachers, teacher aides, pupil personnel, counselors, and educational administrators. It provides summer classroom orientation to freshly graduated teachers or to teachers being introduced into the area of the city or the county, so as to provide specific experience and information at the levels of student competence. It incorporates special community problems, special ongoing Federal, state and local projects, and special courses on those educational systems needed to deal with the students and the community.

Basic tenets of MATE training include the use of behavior modification techniques, student-teacher contracting, programmed instruction and programmed classes. It includes the development of new curricula, such as those dealing with drug prevention and use of a lawas a vehicle for change, for middle and senior high school classrooms. It includes participation in some research functions in order to support ongoing professional involvement in new concepts as well as operationally testing existing ones.

MATE is task-oriented. It attempts to train teachers to deal with disruptive behavior in special education groups, in difficult chronic conduct problems, reading problems, etc.--the problems that arise in ordinary classroom groups.

Staff of MATE are made up of educational technologists, psychologists, lawyers, and community action people representing those behavior skills as well as the curricular skills which a teacher must understand and use in order to deal with present American disruptive behavior.

Specific Objectives of MATE

MATE provides a functional analysis of the school community, its personnel, resources, and the academic levels of its constituents to achieve the following:

- To provide in-service training in behavior modification
- To design appropriate inclass behavior management systems
- To train selected administrators and staff from the problem schools in operant and behavioral design through classes given at the school or at the EC:IBR. [11]

Although MATE includes other objectives, its intensive attempt to improve teacher competency and to apply behavior modification to disruptive behavioral problems is characteristic of most competency-oriented centers.

The Far West Laboratory group (Bay Area Teacher Training Complex) approaches a wider range of problems from a competency orientation. Their statement of purposes, which follows, reflects the desire to build a broad participatory base for their training complex.

"(1) To find out how previously developed and tested Minicourses can be arranged into a logical, effective curriculum for the development of specific skills. The Far West Laboratory has a substantial investment in the production and evaluation of Minicourses. We seek an opportunity to explore ways that these instructional materials can fit into a system of teacher education. A tentative statement of such a system will be completed before this training complex becomes operational.

"(2) To develop systems of interaction analysis which can be used to adapt teaching skills to the total class setting, diagnose the current patterns of teaching skills, and serve as the basis for encouraging self-direction and independence during the professional development of trainees. New forms of interaction analysis include timeline displays, using highly specific category clusters which focus on particular skills, and providing immediate feedback without the necessity of playing back a sound or video recording. Category systems which attend to the cognitive and affective aspects of teacher-pupil contacts are now available.

"(3) To fit available teacher education products into the system and locate areas where additional development is needed. This objective will be achieved during the planning phase. A follow-up program should provide us with evaluative information about the strengths and weaknesses of the training. New instructional materials can be designed to cover weaknesses.

"(4) To test the overall effect of a comprehensive, competency based training program. Although nearly all components of the proposed programs will have been tested, the combined effect of these components is unknown. In effect, we have built the parts of a system in different centers across the country and now must learn how these parts can be combined most effectively. Achievement of this objective will require pre and post evaluation of trainees and comparing their professional growth against comparable groups of trainees who progress through conventional college programs or are exposed, as experienced teachers to conventional in-service programs.

"Ultimately, evaluation must turn to an assessment of the effects of professional teacher growth on the educational development of boys and girls. This is a difficult task, since pupil ability is very difficult to control. We can start by finding out if pupils can perceive any change in the behavior of teachers and whether the pupil's self-concept and their relationships with the teacher have or have not

changed. We can also assess any changes in their attitudes toward the teacher and toward the classroom learning activities. Finally, in carefully controlled designs, we may be able to assess the effect of professional growth on the achievement of boys and girls providing we can design tests that assess the specific teaching objectives that guide classroom learning activities" (18:2-3).

THE EMERGING SCENE

As this is written, future federal support for centers is uncertain. The most active centers appear to be those within established agencies or those formed by two or three substantial organizations (such as a college and school system). However, the basis for emergent institutions has been laid in many cases.

The teacher center has had enormous appeal to many segments of the profession. Its many meanings reflect this--the corporate-minded, the competency-minded, and the teacher-centered all find expression in a style of center and a type of focus.

Thus it has brought together many interested professionals whose persuasions may differ but who show the desire to provide for the continuous professional education of the teachers. Eventually, continuous professional education will be normal and institutionalized. It will respond to the needs which are reflected in the present literature, so that in one form or another, teachers will educate themselves on their own terms, in response to diagnoses by peers and supervisors, and in response to institutional changes and innovations. The teacher center literature will form the archives for the history of the development of continuous teacher education. The effects on schooling will be substantial. Certainly one reason that educational innovation has been so difficult and so ephemeral is that every change in schooling requires development by the teacher if it is to flourish. The teacher center will become, we predict, the essential arm of innovation, enabling schools to re-create themselves. At present, with in-service education so isolated from practice and so sporadic, innovations often die because teachers cannot learn how to carry them on. Many good ideas of teachers never flower because there is no place for them to experiment and train and bring life to their ideas.

Continuous staff education will enable schools to develop unique character because their teachers will be able to learn how to work in the new ways required by unique approaches. Perhaps then our educational scene will be characterized by schools and teachers creating programs tailored to their unique clientele--schools, in short, may become much more different from the way they are now and from each other. A scene of productive pluralism may replace the glassy homogeneity which marks so many of today's schools.

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